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50 The GAZETTE, Montreal, Thurs., July 17, 1975

Jaws puts bite on box offices

TORONTO — (CP — An official of Odeon Theatres says patrons are almost "breaking down the doors" of theatres across the country to see the movie Jaws.

"We've never had a picture that the public wanted to see so much," said Robert Myers, director of buying and booking for the theatre chain.

To date, about one million Canadians have paid to see the Universal Studios shark adventure film now playing in 16 theatres coast to coast. It opened June 20.

The movie has grossed a record-breaking $3.8 million in Canada and $59 million in the United States so far, theatre officials say.

There's nothing to compare it against," said George Dentonzio, president of Famous Players. In its first week in the U.S., it outgrossed the current box-office champion, The Godfather, by $4 million.

As a measure of its popularity, Jaws is playing in English only in some Quebec theatres that haven't shown an English-language movie without dubbing of subtitles for several years.

And said Dentonzio, "It's doing well at them.

"It's such a visual movie that language doesn't seem to be the question," he said. "It's doing remarkably better in its first few weeks than any other movie ever released."

Movie officials said that if public interest continues, Jaws will become North America's all-time box office champion. The Godfather currently holds the record at $100 million, followed by The Sound of Music at $165 million.

Myra Benson shows Robin Patterson a rag doll in Canadian Mime Theatre's The Giantkeepers

Performances fine but familiar in mime play of Giantkeepers

By JAMIE PORTMAN
Southam News Services

NIAGARA-ON-THE LAKE — It's understandable that the people at the Canadian Mime Theatre should wish to stretch the boundaries of their art in order to demonstrate its flexibility as well as its relevance to the present day.

Such enterprise is to be commended — provided that it is accompanied by some degree of common sense. Unfortunately, this latter ingredient was lacking in the Mime Theatre's decision to schedule a not-starter called The Giantkeepers into its summer schedule.

Conceived by a Buffalo writer and composer named Rusa Swain, and adapted and staged by Mime Theatre artistic director Adrian Pecknold, it proves to be a tired, trite and excessively prolonged parable about the evils of conformity.

The somewhat pretentious program notes ramble on at great length about the need to "explore together, in allegory, universal situations — how people control others for their own ends, and how giants submit — sell themselves for rewards, merits, prizes, positions."

Author Swain who has written lamentable diaries but banal lyrics as background to the silent events transpiring on stage, has immodestly described his creation as "locking sound and fury and signifying much."

Like so much of Wain's scenario, this self-appraisal merits severe editing — it would be far better merely to state that his creation is "lacking."

It's a pity that so much care and attention has been lavished by the company on a vehicle which is primarily notable for its marked deficiency of originality.

One can scarcely expect a performing group to give shape and substance to a dramatic void, yet it must be acknowledged that what Pecknold and company have achieved is pleasing to the eye if not the mind.

This is especially true of the staging of the first act, when we receive solid evidence of the artistic heights which mime can reach.

There is, for example, that exquisite opening scheme when a wire mother (Myra Benson) presents her daughter (Robin Patterson) with a rag doll symbolizing the wonder and beauty of life. And there is an early classroom scene when Pecknold puts his players through a delightful stylized stow-and-tell sequence.

It's all very pleasing to behold with the mimes in their colorful overalls and the facemasks in their swirling skirts. There's an engaging freshness and variety in the visual presentation.

But even early on, the cliches are creeping in. A zombie masked creature intrudes on the proceedings. He is The Giantkeeper (a packed principal, personnel officer, boss, tyrant), and he naturally destroys the spontaneity of the show-and-tell, just as he later turns an undergraduate agitprop fest into a horrifying experience for those concerned, and even later seeks the ultimate in regimentation when he manufactures as the head of a concern known as the Puce Manufacturing Company Ltd.

FAMILIAR

The trouble is that it's all so clearly familiar. At one point, during the school sequences, the children turn on the one who is different — he's called "The Ugly" in the script — and torment him. Later, in the factory, the characters are forced to don identical masks — and, by implication, forfeit their identities. Predictably there's a rebel. Equally predictable are the light-hearted scenes in which the conformists temporarily break their bonds and indulge in a few spirited hijinks before the boss man comes back and forces them to march across the stage like wind-up toys.

The experience tends to leave the viewer, much as he may admire with a so-what feeling of indifference. Rarely has a stage presentation, mime or otherwise, bellowed the obvious to the point of absurdity. Swain's background lyrics further third the message home with such phrases as "educate them," regulate them, organize them," as a heavy-handed way of demonstrating the System's obsession with stifling individual expression.

Rock-jazz fusion is complete in Corea, Coryell and Burton

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
for The Gazette

Last night's jazz-rock extravaganza at Place des Nations, starring three of the finest groups of the genre — Chick Corea & Return to Forever, Larry Coryell & the Eleventh Houseand Gary Burton — offered the most complete expositions of the ideas and musical developments occurring in this fusion between "rock" and "jazz".

The assembled musicians have been prominent on the jazz scene for the past half-dozen years but only over the last couple of seasons has their music been accepted by a mass audience outside the jazz coterie.

Unfortunately, the slim crowd at the open-air site — about 1,000 — was not large enough to warrant the return of such ambitious bills in the future.

SENSITIVE

Gary Burton is probably the most sensitive and probing virtuoso of the vibraphone playing today.

Paradoxically, while his backing group swings with multi-textured strains, Burton's playing comes across almost as renaissance lore in its delicacy and complexity. His bell-like gumballs are feathery and lilting without ever taking a back seat to his busy rhythm section.

Burton, who plays with two [illegible] four or six mallets, performed with a group that is undoubtedly the most complete of his career. Two electric guitarists, Mick Goodrick and Pat Metheny, offered harmony and counterpoint without getting carried away with themselves (a fault often seen in the fast and furious jazz-rock scene)

The vibraphonist has also reaffirmed himself with the bassist and drummer, Steve Swallow and Bob Moses, with whom he started out, and their rhythms were both more colorful and thoughtful than ever before.

AVANT-GARDE

Guitarist Larry Coryell has been associated with members of the jazz avant-garde in the past and has style shows the influence of both Ornette Coleman and Jimi Hendrix in its search for aural and improvisational consequence. His group, the Eleventh House, has given him a considerably wider public but it has not stopped Coryell from being one of the most probing of all guitarists.

He opened with a couple of acoustic rumbles that contained references to Ravel, Elizabethan music, country-funk, flamenco and jazz. He then donned his electric axe and poured forth some wild sounds that show a concern with adventurous stretched-out notes rather than bound-in structures.

His group included powerhouse lickety-split drummer Alphonse Mouzon, himself a current jazz star, and the ethereal doodlings of synthesizer-keyboardist Mike Mandel. Coryell & Eleventh House churned out consistently interesting, though occasionally indulgent, music.

JAUNTY

The star of the show, Chick Corea, has been a regular on the best-selling album charts recently and has formulated a jaunty keyboard style (most electric piano) whose influence has already been seen in countless young bands. In Corea's case, he has narrowed spontaneity for a rocking communion with his audience. His quartet is characterized by an almost metronomic drive that puts most rock 'n' roll bands to shame. Corea's former brisk style has become almost flippant at times, but when the band hits an intense tight groove, they're not difficult to move to.

The real star of Corea's group is electric bassist Stan Clarke, a 24-year-old who has already been acclaimed the finest practitioner of his instrument. In essence, he plays bass like a guitar, with growls, rumbles and carousses, instead of being strictly a timekeeper, and his style is fascinating. Drummer Lenny White and guitarist Al DeMeola rounded out the group.

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